DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 412 414 CE 074 985

AUTHOR	Pemagbi, Joe; Rogers, Alan
TITLE	Literacy Enhancement in English in West Africa. Guidebook for the Production and Use of Real and Learner-Generated Materials.
INSTITUTION	Education for Development, Reading (England).
SPONS AGENCY	British Council, Accra (Sierra Leone).
PUB DATE	1996-00-00
NOTE	44p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Education for Development, Building 33, University of Reading, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ, England, United Kingdom.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; *Literacy Education; *Material Development; *Student Developed Materials
IDENTIFIERS	*Africa (West)

ABSTRACT

This guide is designed for facilitators and planners of adult literacy programs in the various countries of Anglophone West Africa, where many individuals have learned literacy in their own community languages but have not developed the English literacy skills required to function effectively in public administration and employment facilities. The following topics are among those discussed in the guide's four chapters: meaningful literacy enhancement activities in West Africa and challenges in content, materials, methods and training (the who, why, what, and how of literacy in English and literacy enhancement programs); the "real literacies" approach to literacy versus the traditional approach; identification and use of real literacy materials (their advantages, disadvantages, intended audience, collection, and use in the classroom; methods of helping facilitators produce, identify, and use real literacy materials, and introduction of real literacy materials into the community); and production and use of learner-generated materials (their advantages, disadvantages, preparation, and use; methods of helping facilitators produce, identify, and use learner-generated literacy materials; and introduction of learner-generated literacy materials into the community). Tips and blank boxes for facilitators to use in developing literacy materials and planning their use are included throughout the guide. (MN)

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LITERACY ENHANCEMENT IN ENGLISH IN WEST AFRICA

GUIDEBOOK FOR THE PRODUCTION AND USE OF REAL AND LEARNER-GENERATED MATERIALS

Joe Pemagbi
Alan Rogers

BRITISH COUNCIL WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PROJECT
Directed by the British Council Sierra Leone

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CONTENTS

i. Acknowledgement

1.0 Introduction
1.0 Chapter 1
Meaningful Literacy Enhancement Activities in English in West Africa: Challenges in Content, Materials, Methods and Training
1.1 Enhancement of What?
1.2 Different Discourses
1.3 The 'WHO' of Literacy in English
1.4 The 'WHY' of English Literacy
1.5 The 'WHAT' of Literacy in English
1.6 Contents
1.7 The 'HOW' of Literacy in English Enhancement Programmes
1.8 Training
1.9 Conclusion

2.0 Chapter 2
What Do We Mean by Real Literacies?
2.1 The Traditional Approach
2.2 The Real Literacies Approach

3.0 Chapter 3
Identifying and Using Real Literacy Materials
3.1 Definition of Real Literacy Materials
3.2 Advantages of Real Literacy Materials
3.3 Disadvantages of Real Literacy Materials
3.4 Who are Real Literacy Materials Meant for?
3.5 Collecting Real Literacy Materials
3.6 Use of Real Literacy Materials in the Classroom
3.7 How to Prepare the Facilitators to Produce and Use Real Literacy Materials
3.8 How to Support the Facilitators to Identify and Use Real Literacy Materials
3.9 Introducing Real Literacy Materials into the Community

4.0 Chapter 4
Producing and Using Learner-Generated Materials
4.1 Background
4.2 Definition of Learner-Generated Materials
4.3 Advantages of Learner-Generated Materials
4.4 Disadvantages of Learner-Generated Materials
4.5 How to Prepare Learner-Generated Materials
4.6 Learner-Generated Materials and Real Literacy Materials
4.7 How to Use Learner-Generated Materials
4.8 Preparing the Facilitators to Produce and Use Learner-Generated Materials
4.9 Support for Facilitators to Produce and Use Learner-Generated Materials

5.0 How to Transfer Learner-Generated Materials into Community Use

6.0 Conclusion

i. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am extremely grateful to Professor Alan Rogers of Education for Development and the University of Reading for his invaluable contribution to this guidebook. The first two chapters that provide the conceptual framework for the guidebook are entirely his own effort. He also carries the credit for typing the material as the workshop produced them, sharing his several years of experience in literacy work with us and helping with the editing of the final draft.

Many thanks go to my colleagues, Professor Michael Omolewa of the University of Ibadan, Dr Noel Ihebuzor of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Dr Augustine Bobda of the Department of English of the University of Yaounde, and Mrs Rosaline M'Carthy of the Freetown Teachers College, whose research findings on literacy in their respective countries provided the background information for the workshop at which the draft for this guidebook was produced, and for their committed participation in the workshop; Mr Mettle-Nunoo and Mr E T A Abbey for their presentations on the Ghanaian literacy situation that stimulated and enriched the purpose of the workshop; and to Mrs Caroline Adumuah and Mrs Sussie Berdie of Literacy House, Ghana, for contributing to this "pioneering" effort in enhancing English in West Africa.

Immeasurable thanks to the British Council in Accra for the remarkably faultless arrangements before and during the workshop.

And of course a lot of thanks go to Mr Peter Hilken, Director of the British Council in Sierra Leone, whose initiative has resulted in this guidebook.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This guidebook, designed to be used in the various countries of Anglophone West Africa, was produced during a regional workshop held in Accra, Ghana, in September, 1995.

The aim of the guidebook is to encourage facilitators and planners of adult literacy programmes to look at their activities in a new way and to adopt new ways of working with their literacy learners. These new ways of looking at literacy and producing literacy learning materials which we are advocating in this guidebook come from the findings of an ODA-funded research on post-literacy activities (Using Literacy: ODA serial no. 10) carried out by Education for Development.

Guidelines on how to use these new ways are produced in chapters three and four. But for the 'literacyst' (my coining for people involved in literacy work) to fully understand and effectively adopt and adapt these new ways, he needs information on the historical circumstances and research activities that have led to them. This information is provided in chapters one and two; we urge particularly facilitators, supervisors and planners to read them carefully.

Another important thing about the guidebook is that while it has been designed for enhancement of literacy in English, the general principles can be applied to any language. It all depends on the user, his/her purpose and situation. That is why we have directly and personally addressed her/him as "you" in places where we have asked her/him to give her/his own ideas.

Perhaps the literacyst may want to ask why we have produced a guidebook for literacy enhancement in English in a heavily multilingual region which gives priority to literacy for adults in their own community languages. The answer is that the entire Literacy Enhancement in English Project (LEEP) of which this guidebook is a product is a response to the needs of thousands of early school leavers, those who have learned literacy in their own languages as well as non-literates to learn literacy in English.

This need was confirmed by the findings of research conducted in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Cameroon (details of these research exercises can be read in the report of the workshop at which the manuscript for this guidebook was produced) which state that because of the functions of English - in a multilingual context - as the language of public administration and employment facilities, the status that goes with these functions and the fact that all activities that require literacy in these countries are carried out in English, only literacy in English is of functional value to them.

There is another good reason for producing this guidebook for English. The guidebook advocates the use of Real Literacy Materials in the environment, and these are available almost entirely in English in Anglophone West Africa.

You, the literacyst, can use this guidebook in several different ways:

Ways you can use this guidebook

1. you can read it for yourself

2. you can discuss it with other facilitators during a training session

3. you can discuss it among a group of supervisors and/or trainers in preparation for a training of trainers programme

4. you can discuss it when planning a literacy programme or curriculum

Now add some other ways in which you could use it in your own situation.

5.

6.

7.

8.

We want you to apply what you read here to your own experience, so that you can reflect critically on your own work, trying to find out if there are other ways in which you could do things. So please relate everything you read in this guidebook to what you are doing at the moment.

The Real Literacies Approach, whether it is through Learner-Generated Materials (LGM) or through 'Real Literacy Materials' (RLM), will pose you many challenges. But it is also true that using the Real Literacies Methods in your literacy classes will be very rewarding. Both you and your participants will gain much encouragement from this activity. It will add excitement and motivation to your work. It will give you clear indications of success. In the end, this new approach will ease your work - although at the start it will cause you to work rather harder.

Do not try to do everything in this guidebook from the start. Just choose one kind of activity at a time and do it well. It is most important that you make a start, however small that start may be, and let the activities grow naturally.

Finally, we urge you to do the exercises with your participants. That will give them confidence, make them feel that they are part of preparing their learning materials and their teaching, motivate them to learn faster and make your work easy.

Joe Pemagbi

7

1.0 CHAPTER 1: MEANINGFUL LITERACY ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES IN ENGLISH IN WEST AFRICA: CHALLENGES IN CONTENT, MATERIALS, METHODS AND TRAINING

By Alan Rogers

INTRODUCTION

One or two introductory comments:

a) I take it that we are talking about adult and about non-formal education, not about the formal primary schools. There is an argument that English literacy is best promoted by concentrating on schools and on youth, but I am not going to argue about this.

b) I take it too that what is not needed is a series of 'tips for teachers'. What I propose to do is to try to understand what is going on when we seek to enhance literacy in English, to develop our logic frame. I will try to be very practical about this, but there will be a conceptual basis to this paper.

c) I am going to take some of the keywords of the title and build my paper round this. But I will wish to add one or two other words (which are implied in the title) to make sure that I deal with all the relevant areas of discussion. And I will take them in a different order from the order in the title. If I have one comment about the title, it is that it (naturally) concentrates on those elements in the English literacy promotion programme which we (as teachers and providers) control: it leaves out those which we cannot control - the participant or target group and their motivations.

1.1 ENHANCEMENT OF WHAT?

Our starting point must be: What are we enhancing?

Literacy Learning in the Classroom

I want to suggest that there is an ambiguity in this term. For some of us, it will mean the enhancement of English literacy **learning** programmes; the enhancement of classroom activities; better teaching of English literacy. This, after all, is how the term 'literacy' is normally used. When we speak of government funding literacy, we mean 'classes in literacy'; when we talk about literacy materials, we mean materials to be used for 'learning literacy'. When we speak of an NGO launching a new literacy initiative, we mean a literacy teaching programme. One of the clearest examples I know of this use of the term 'literacy' is in the title of a report on 'post-literacy': *After Literacy, What?* Here the word 'literacy' means the initial teaching/learning of literacy.

Literacy in the Community

But literacy is not a classroom activity. Literacy is what we do in our everyday lives in our own communities. I am doing it at the moment - writing a paper. You are doing it at the moment, reading a guidebook. We are not talking about learning to read and write but about actually reading and writing, about literacy practices.

All of us want literacy (whether in English or in any other language) to bring about social and economic benefits to the users. But we must remember the key concept: "It is not the learning of literacy which brings about social or economic benefits but the use of literacy in real situations for real purposes, using real materials" (Rogers 1994a). Learning literacy never benefited anyone: using literacy skills did.

I therefore want to suggest that the first element of our approach to promoting English literacy is that we are not promoting classroom situations. Rather we are promoting people's use of English literacy in their everyday lives. The aim of all literacy and language programmes is to promote literacy practices, the use of literacy and language in real life. I long to see the day when a government or an NGO will launch a real literacy programme designed to increase the number of times every day when people in our towns and villages really read and really write outside the classroom. This, I suggest, should be the aim of our workshop.

From the Classroom to the Community

But some may argue that the classroom is closely related to the use of literacy and English in the community. I doubt this. There are many teaching-learning programmes in literacy and in English - not enough, perhaps but still very many. But experience everywhere shows that the transfer of what is learned in the classroom into the community is the weak point. I feel we need to dwell on this: why is this so? Many donors are pulling out of literacy teaching programmes for adults and concentrating instead on primary schools for children, simply because their experience indicates that adult literacy campaigns are frankly useless. Why? The learning of literacy and the learning of English is often reasonably effective, but the use of literacy skills and/or English is not.

1.2 DIFFERENT DISCOURSES

I want to suggest that one of the reasons for this is that the discourse of the classroom and the discourse of the community are often very different. Words mean different things in the classroom and outside it. One research project showed that children in school did not relate the word 'ball' in a picture book indoors with the object they used in the playground. It meant something different to them. Inside the classroom, 'ball' was a word to be learned; outside, ball was a thing to be kicked or thrown or hit. The word was unreal; the thing was real.

The same thing is true for adults. I had an interesting experience in India with an adult literacy class. The teachers had chosen so-called 'generative' words for women: *puri* (water) and *agni* (fire). These, they argued, were words of great significance for the women. But when I went into the homes of these same women, I asked them when, if ever, they felt they needed to read about fire or to write about water? They said that they did not think of '*agni*' or '*puri*' in these terms: they were "words to be learned", not things in the home. They said that they did not need to use these two words in any reading or writing activity in their homes or outside of it, although they talked about them a lot. More useful would have been the names of vegetables which they wanted to use in the market or prices or the names of towns on the buses.

The point I am making is that the language we learn in the classroom is quite different from the language we use in the home. The very words and the way we use them; the tones in which they are uttered - the whole 'discourse' is different.

Language is more normally learned outside the classroom than in it. So if we learn literacy or English in the classroom, using the classroom discourse, we need to take steps to build the bridge between the discourse of the community and the discourse of the classroom. I will return to this later, but I want to establish my theme from the start, for we shall see that this dichotomy between classroom and community affects all aspects of our approach to 'enhancing literacy in English'.

1.3 THE 'WHO' OF LITERACY IN ENGLISH (PARTICIPANTS)

Let me start with one key element in enhancing the literacy equation, the people who want the English literacy. Who are we working with?

The Classroom 'Who'

The classroom approach says that the 'who' are those who are illiterate or who lack English. The classroom programme only reaches those who come to classes, those who can be persuaded to come in. They are relatively speaking a small group of persons. What is more, they are a homogeneous group. All those who are there lack knowledge and skills. These people are separated out from the community. Those who can read and write are excluded from this group.

The Community 'Who'

The community approach to literacy and English deals with a quite different group - a much bigger group, all those who have any need for help with their English in the community, whether they are in classes or not. These people are not separated out; they are in mixed groups of 'non-literate' and literate; and they learn from each other, not just from a teacher.

Learning in the Classroom and in the Community

One of the biggest faults of the 'classroom' approach to literacy is that it talks about the people in classes as 'learners'. This implies (and indeed it is sometimes stated) that those who are not in the classes are not learners. Despite all that we know about lifelong learning, we still hear statements like "How can we get some people (especially women) to become learners?".

The community literacy approach on the other hand says that all people are already 'learners' - and that they are learning every day from their everyday experiences. They don't need to go to school to become learners. The community approach to literacy/English suggests that we should use the word 'learner' of all in the community, and that we should talk about 'student learners' for those people who are in the classroom. The use of the word 'learner' only for those people in literacy classes demeans those who are not in our classes. That would be one practical step towards enhancing literacy in English.

Student-Learner Control

There is a lot of rhetoric spoken about adult education giving people what they want. "Adult education is people learning what they want to learn when they want to learn it, where they want to learn it and in the way they want to learn it": this was the early motto of the WEA in the UK. But in fact classroom literacy does not do this. Instead, it gives the people what we feel they need, not what they want. They may choose the time and place of the classes; but the length of the course, the sequence of the material, the kind of material which is used in the class are all controlled by the providers and the teachers.

West Africa
The one term in the title which does refer to the 'who' relates to this region, West Africa. We know that we are talking about people in this region.

But here again, the dichotomy reveals much that we may not have thought about.

Classroom Literacy is Generalised
Classroom literacy is built on the view that what is relevant to one part of this vast region will be applicable to another part of the region. Approaches and materials can be transferred from classrooms in one part of the region to classrooms in other parts of the region, from urban to rural areas, from one occupational group to another. National and international campaigns and programmes have been launched; the encouragement of the larger international NGOs like UNICEF etc promotes such approaches.

Community Literacy is Localised
But community literacy is quite different: it promotes what is locally relevant. Because people are learning literacy in the course of their everyday lives, because they are trying to learn English for particular purposes which are very real to them, the literacy needs of fisherfolk are different from those of farmers. But equally, the needs and wants of the fisherfolk in one area are again different from those of other fisherfolk even in a nearby area. All the research that is now being done shows that 'learning wants' are very local. I have just published a paper written by someone who spent many years in the Amazon jungle; she shows that two villages in that region within a few miles of each other chose quite different literacy approaches for quite realistic reasons. Again, in India, detailed studies of villages and of urban slums show that different groups of men and women have quite different approaches to learning literacy and learning English. So another principle for enhancing literacy in English is to be local - with all that implies for the training of the teachers.

1.4 THE 'WHY' OF ENGLISH LITERACY (MOTIVATION)

It is clear then that there is a difference between the motivations of those in the classroom programmes and those who are engaged in learning literacy/English in the community.

The Classroom 'Why'
Studies show that those who attend literacy classes come for two main reasons:

a) **'Functional Literacy'**
Some say they want to be able to do something - to keep accounts, to read bus signs, to write letters. But there is a large amount of rhetoric here. These people have internalised what their teachers have told them. We can see this from the simple fact that of all those who say they wish to keep accounts, hardly one percent ever do keep accounts; of those who claim they wish to write a letter, only 7% actually ever write a letter.

'Literacy Comes First'
But they still come. They feel that they must learn literacy first and then use it afterwards. This is what we call the 'literacy comes first approach'. We have used the slogans 'Literacy is the entry point to development', 'literacy is the first step to development' etc.

But these student learners have no clear idea of how they will actually use their literacy or their English in their everyday lives. For them, it is learn first and then work out how to use it later. This is the same approach of the schools for children.

The 'literacy first' approach seems to me to be one of the biggest causes of the failure of most national and international literacy campaigns. Some literacy class providers, in their anxiety to motivate non-literate persons to learn literacy skills, overstate the case for learning literacy: if you become literate, you will not be cheated; you will be more healthy; you can become richer. They emphasise that non-literate persons cannot engage in their own development. Statements like this can be heard in many parts of the world; and many of them have been internalised by many non-literate persons.

b) 'Status'

However, a second main reason why people come to literacy or English classes is to join the literate group or the speakers of English. For them, it is a status thing. "If you are illiterate, people look at you, they think you are stupid": so said one member of a literacy class in Bangladesh. These people come to literacy classes, not to do something but to be something. And this is why the drop out figures are usually so high.

The Community Literacy 'Why'

Those who develop their literacy and English skills in the community, on the other hand, do it not through a special learning programme but through doing something for real. They want to learn and develop in order to achieve something outside the learning programme. Theirs is not a 'literacy first' approach but a 'literacy second' approach. They have already started (often with other people) on a task; and in the course of this task, they feel the need for improving their literacy or English skills. Their approach is truly functional: they are learning by doing. They are working in mixed groups (not homogeneous groups of only illiterate persons) to achieve a particular task.

'Literacy Comes Second'

There could not be a more clear-cut contrast between the classroom approach to literacy/English and the community approach than in their thinking about literacy first or literacy second. Those who see literacy as being learned in and from the community see that non-literate persons are capable of engaging in developmental tasks for themselves; that they will be motivated to learn literacy when they see the real need for it in real situations. Start with a developmental task; and if and when the participants express the need to learn, to read and write or to learn English, then is the time to encourage them with this need.

1.5 THE 'WHAT' OF LITERACY/ENGLISH (MATERIALS)

If we build our literacy promotion programme on a literacy comes second approach, this will have profound implications for the kind of materials which we will use. The way the classroom literacy experts and the community literacy practitioners regard the whole idea of 'literacy materials' is quite different.

Classroom Materials

The classroom approach to literacy or English stresses the need for specially written teaching-learning materials - primers and supplementary/follow up materials. These are compiled by experts (usually educationalists). They have no existence outside of the classroom - which is why relatively few student learners take them home - they are out of place in the home.

Materials for Literacy Comes First Approach

The classroom only uses such specially prepared learning materials - textbooks; readers; exercise books. The teachers and providers do not look around them for what already exists (indeed, they often assert that there are no community literacy materials in their locality). The teachers do not even use with their 'learners' what they themselves read or write for real. What is appropriate for the classroom is quite different from what goes on in the community. The student learners are required to read things which they would never read in the community ("The cat sat on the mat" etc). They must, so it is argued, start with simple words and then move on to more difficult words. They are thus required to write things which they would never ever write for themselves, artificial exercises specifically designed for learning to read and to write. Once again, the approach is learn first through artificial exercises and then practise with real materials.

There is one major result of only using special materials in the classroom which is damaging to the wider perspective of lifelong learning. Any literacy learning programme which only uses special literacy materials will tend to create dependency: the student participants will often come to feel they can only learn when they are in class and when the teacher is there; they will come to despise the learning they do in the community as not in some way being 'real'. Learning and the classroom become identified.

Community Materials

For the community literacy practitioner, the term 'literacy materials' means those pieces of written or printed materials which are created for use in every day living outside the classroom. They are not produced for 'learning'; rather, they are produced for use. These are 'real' (as distinct from 'specially prepared') literacy materials.

A clear example of the distinction can be seen in newspapers. Newspapers are real materials - they are not written for anyone to 'learn' to read and write from them. But the specially written 'neo-literate' corners or columns or supplements or even the whole of specially prepared 'neo-literate newspapers' are compiled specifically for 'learning'. Both of them are literacy materials, not just the latter.

Materials for 'Literacy Comes Second' Approach

If we adopt the 'literacy comes second' approach, we shall be working with a mixed group of literate and non-literate persons on some developmental task which they have set for themselves. During the course of that task, some or all of them will have decided that they need to develop their literacy/English skills. To ask them to abandon their task and to turn over to learning through a primer will kill all motivation. The community literacy approach would use the real materials of the task in question for this learning. We once taught literacy in India through film advertisements in the local newspaper (real materials, not written or published to help people learn but to inform people for real), simply because that was what the student learners wanted to learn. The control of community literacy materials lies with the participants, though the teacher may help with the identification of such materials.

One of the things which research into adult learning shows clearly is that adults do not need to learn through simple words and then move to difficult words. They will master difficult words immediately if they are needed for some task or if they are relevant to their own lives. Adults learn best from real materials required for real tasks. They learn for the immediate, not for the future. They learn by doing for real, not by practising in artificial situations. Just as one learns to swim by swimming and learns to type by typing, so one learns literacy by reading and writing for real.

In some contexts, there will, it is true, be a scarcity of such real materials. In this case, it is the task of the teacher/facilitator to identify such materials in other contexts and to enable it to be brought into the community - to help to build up the literate environment in the community. Unless the teacher is him/herself reading and writing in their everyday lives, they will not make a good teacher; and we need to encourage our teachers to look closely at their own literacy practices, to see which of these can be used by the participants in their classrooms.

1.6 CONTENTS

This brings us to the 'Contents' part of the title. Once again, there is a great difference in approach.

Classroom Literacy Contents
Those who develop literacy materials for learning, who write and print follow-up materials, concentrate on trying to get developmental messages over to the student learners. They stress the new uses of literacy, using literacy in ways which are not normal in the community. Their aim in this is to instruct the people, to tell them what they do not know.

Community Literacy Contents
Nothing could be more different from the community literacy approach. Real materials mean that the contents will be real, not artificially devised. It will be based in real life, designed for a purpose (even if the purpose is to amuse, like the T-shirts) rather than to instruct.

1.7 THE 'HOW' OF LITERACY IN ENGLISH ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMMES

Which brings us to 'methods'. How can we enhance reading and writing for real in the community?

I want to suggest three strategies. I do not suggest that these are alternatives: perhaps all three should be followed at the same time in any programme which will genuinely enhance literacy practices.

1. I suggest that where we continue to use classroom programmes, the teachers in these classrooms should bring 'real' materials into the classroom. They should carry out (with the participants in the classes) a survey of what real materials exist and how they are used: religious items such as Bibles and hymn books; secular items such as calendars; political material like posters and leaflets; government materials such as forms to be filled in etc. We need to explore with the participants which of these they wish to be able to handle; how they feel about these materials; what strategies they already adopt to cope with them - in short, to reflect critically on their experience of literacy in the community. We have used in our report on *Using Literacy* a diagram to show how we envisage real materials being used in the classes; by introducing real materials bit by bit into the literacy learning programmes, by bringing the discourse of the community into the classroom, by gradually transferring the attention of the student learners away from the textbook and primer to real materials, the teacher can encourage the student learners to take more and more control over their learning and to transfer their use of their literacy skills from the classroom into the community.

2. If we are really to enhance literacy in English in the community, then we need to provide help to those who need it outside the classroom at the place and at the time when they need it most. No one wants to learn about how to bring up children when they have no

children; they need it when they face some problem about bringing up children - in the home (not in a classroom) and on the day some problem arises. The same is true for many people in the community: they need help with their literacy and English when and where they experience difficulty. In other words, provide English language literacy on a 'literacy comes second' basis. How to provide this literacy support services needs to be worked out, but it need not cost a lot.

3. And thirdly, we need to work with those who produce literacy materials (real materials, that is) to encourage them to produce materials which are more appropriate to those who wish to use them. The classroom approach to literacy says that the 'illiterate' need to adapt themselves to the materials - to learn to read and write what is there. The community approach says that some of the materials should perhaps be adapted to the needs of the people. We have some experience that many of those who produce real materials (especially those who produce extension materials, in health, women's programmes, agriculture etc) are keen to work with literacy practitioners to adapt their materials to the needs of those who have limited skills and experience and confidence in reading and writing. The Plain English Campaign in the UK is a clear example of this approach.

We will in this guidebook try to examine all three of these questions:

1. how can we use our classrooms to encourage the practice of literacy (reading and writing and calculating) in the community outside the classroom?

2. how can we help those who are having difficulty with reading and writing (English) in the community and who do not come into classes?

3. how can we help those who produce real materials to adapt their materials to the needs of new readers and new writers?

1.8 TRAINING

Which brings us nicely to the last element in the title, 'training'. I want to suggest that there might need to be three training programmes:

1. training of local facilitators to build their literacy learning programmes in their classrooms on existing literacy practices in the community - how to survey existing literacy practices and materials; how to examine with their student participants the experience of non-literacy in their own groups; how to identify real materials and to mediate these to their student learners.

2. training of other development workers and perhaps volunteers to provide help to those they deal with in coping with literacy situations.

3. training of producers of real materials in how to write for those with literacy difficulties.

Of these three training agendas, the first is clearly the most difficult. We need to help literacy/English language teachers to see their literacy/English in a new way; not to see it as they were taught. Experience shows that this is by far the most difficult of all our tasks of designing programmes to enhance the use of literacy in the community.

1.9 CONCLUSION

What we have been talking about in relating classroom literacy enhancement to community literacy enhancement is of course simply another example of the difference between teaching children in school and teaching adults. It is also perhaps the difference between formal education (schooling) and non-formal education. What worries me most is that most adult literacy programmes (even those under the name of Freire) do not treat the student participants as adults but as children - the "learn this now and practise it later" attitude. Faure and his UNESCO Commission characterised this as the difference between 'Learning to Become' something in the future (schooling) and 'Learning to Be' what you already are.

I think I can tabulate the difference in the following form:

	Classroom literacy	Community literacy
Enhancement	of learning literacy	of using literacy
Who?	small and dwindling group homogeneous group 'learners' are those in class	all users of literacy mixed group all in community are learners
Why?	partly use/partly status	use
Programmes	general applicable to all 'learners'	decentralised localised to particular groups
Materials	special learners adapt to materials	real materials adapt to users
Content	new uses of literacy	existing uses of literacy
Methods	literacy comes first	literacy comes second
Training	to teach training of trainers	to assist training of helpers and producers as well.

2.0 CHAPTER 2: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'REAL LITERACIES'?

By
Alan Rogers

'Real Literacies' is an approach to literacy which is very different from the traditional approach to adult literacy. It began in the middle of the 1980s and is beginning to spread widely in different countries - Nepal, Bangladesh, Uganda, South Africa, India, Egypt and now West Africa all have some programmes which use the 'real literacies' approach. You can read more about this approach in the books listed at the end of this chapter.

2.1 THE TRADITIONAL LITERACY APPROACH

The traditional approach to literacy is aimed at providing literacy learning centres for small groups of completely non-literate persons (termed 'illiterates') to turn them into 'literates'. It provides special learning materials for them which are produced in a variety of ways - some by so-called literacy experts; some by academics and journalists; some using the Freirean approach, by the literacy workers selecting 'generative words' from the speech of the participants; some using the 'Language Experience Approach' (LEA), taking the words of the participants as they tell a story or their own history and writing special learning materials; and some under the Action Aid Reflect programme, using PRA methods to generate special learning materials for use in learning centres. Most of these programmes use the same materials for every kind of group - men and women, rural and urban, slum dwellers and more prosperous residents etc; but some produce different materials for different groups of adult 'learners'. And once the 'learner' (the word 'learner' is used for people in classes; those not in classes are called 'non-learners') has used this material to learn to 'read' (in general) and to 'write' (in general), they are believed to be able to read anything and to write anything. Reading and writing are seen as skills, detached from any particular context; they can be applied to any new situation. Traditional literacy approaches suggest that once you can read, you can read anything; once you can write, you can write anything. The main aim of a 'literacy programme' or 'literacy campaign' is simply to 'teach literacy skills'.

You can now ask yourself

who wrote the literacy primer or literacy learning materials which are used in the literacy classes which I am associated with?

2.2 THE REAL LITERACIES APPROACH

The approach of Real Literacies is very different. It says that the main aim of any literacy programme is to encourage not the learning of literacy skills but the use of literacy skills outside of the learning centre or classroom. It does not concentrate its attention solely on single homogeneous groups of non-literate persons but on other kinds of groups - market and street traders, taxi drivers, hospital porters, rickshaw drivers, fisherfolk and fish preparation workers and market women, rural women engaged in hand pump projects, women working in quarries (these are real examples of work being undertaken at the moment). Real Literacies says that the 'literacy practices' which these groups engage in are each different - and this means that any learning programme which is designed to help them to develop their literacy skills will need to be different. You cannot teach quarrywomen to read in the same way as you can teach fishmarket vendors, because their literacy needs will be completely different. The aim of the Real Literacies Approach is to help people to practise their literacy in the community, not just to learn it in the learning centre. 'Real literacy materials' means all those written and printed materials which one can find outside of the learning centres, in the community - government driving licence forms, political posters, UNICEF health leaflets, calendars and diaries, T-shirts, vehicle number plates, the words and numbers on money notes, etc. Of course there are more of these in the towns than in the rural villages - but there will be very few villages indeed which do not have a school or clinic noticeboard, a church or temple without some writing, some graffiti on the walls. And many people will find themselves needing to make a piece of writing - a letter to a relative or friend, a note to school about their children, a shopping list, a note about some money transaction etc. All these are literacy materials, put up for someone to read and use, sometimes for someone to write.

Later in this guidebook, you will be asked to look more closely at your own environment to see what 'real materials' are available. But at this stage think carefully about the situation you are working in and:

Identify two different groups in your neighbourhood:

Group 1.

Group 2.

Now list:

a) what kind of literacy practices might they come up against?

Group 1: Group 2:

b) what kind of literacy materials already exist for these groups?

Group 1: Group 2:

One of the main problems of the traditional literacy approach is the lack of transfer from the 'classroom' to the community. People who can read the primer in the adult literacy centre, who can write the primer literacy exercises, often do not carry these skills over into their everyday lives. We find many people who come out of our literacy classes who can 'read' and 'write' but who do not read anything in the village or town and who do not write anything either. Why is that?

Suggest some reasons why people do not practise literacy after learning in classes

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5.

The aim of the Real Literacies Movement is to move away from the classroom or learning centre into the community; to provide help to all those in the community who have literacy needs - whether they are completely non-literate or whether they have some limited skills but lack confidence.

There are many ways of doing this. This guidebook has selected out two such strategies:

1. How to identify and use 'real literacy materials' in the learning programmes (Chapter 3)
2. How to encourage groups of people to write and produce their own materials (what is called in the jargon of the time 'learner-generated materials' or LGM) (Chapter 4)

But there are other strategies which we may adopt to promote the **use** of literacy in the community:

For example:

* to get more real literacy materials into the villages and urban housing areas:

  try to think of any ways you could help to get this done

* to get more appropriate kinds of materials produced, printed and distributed:

  try to think of any ways you could help to get this done

* to get some of the extension workers to help people with their literacy:

  try to think of any ways you could help to get this done

*Perhaps you can think of other ways in which we can promote the **practice of literacy** in the community.*

There are several other differences between the traditional approach to literacy and the new 'real literacies' approach.

1. Traditional literacy works only with homogeneous groups of illiterates - everyone in the class is non-literate. Real literacies often work with mixed groups. For example, women's groups engaged in an income-generation programme which may contain some people who are non-literate and some persons with literacy skills.

2. Traditional literacy tends to work on a 'literacy first' basis: it says, "you must learn literacy first before you can engage in development"; "literacy is the entry point to development" etc. The 'Real Literacies Movement' says that non-literate people can engage in their own development without learning to read and write first. It encourages them to start working on their own development plan; it puts learning 'literacy second', not first.

3. Traditional literacy programmes tend to stress the 'new uses of literacy' - that is, it asks people to do things which they do not normally do (read new books or booklets on health or the environment, for example, or keep a family medical record etc). 'Real Literacies' says that it will help people with their existing literacy practices - what they already do.
And this will have a most important impact on the way in which we plan and run our literacy enhancement programme. We shall need FIRST OF ALL to investigate what literacies already exist in our local community; what 'real materials' there are and how they are used; how people regard literacy and who they think should become literate. This 'research' element lies at the basis of every 'real literacy' programme. You cannot help people with their real literacies if you do not know what those literacies are!

This 'research' does not need to be done by you alone: the participants in your literacy enhancement programmes can themselves tell you a great deal about their own literacy environment. Ask them to help you to research existing literacy practices, 'real literacy materials' and literacy perceptions.

We hope that you can see that 'Real Literacies' is a very different approach to helping people with their literacy practices in the community from the traditional one of providing learning in literacy learning centres. We hope that you - like us - will become excited by this new way of trying to help people with their literacy activities. We hope that you will be willing to experiment, to try out new ways of working - ways which we haven't thought of - activities which you design to help promote the literacy practices of particular groups in the towns and villages in your own country of West Africa. If you do, then do write to us and tell us about your experiences: that will be a 'real literacy' activity for yourself!

Reading

If you want a good general introduction to the 'Real Literacies' approach, you cannot do better than read David Barton - Literacy: *the ecology of written language* Blackwells, Oxford 1994 (ignore the title: it is very readable and very practical). For case studies, read Education for Development *Voices on Literacy* 1994 and Alan Rogers *Women, Literacy, Income Generation* Education for Development 1994. More advanced reading (but still very worthwhile) are Mike Baynham *Literacy Practices* Longman 1995; Brian Street's two new books *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy* Cambridge 1994 which contains some exciting case studies, and *Social Literacies*: Longman 1995 (again, ignore the complicated title. Many people will find his earlier book very revealing since it lays the foundation not only for all his later work but for many other people's work: *Literacy in Theory and Practice* Cambridge 1984).

3.0 CHAPTER 3: IDENTIFYING AND USING REAL LITERACY MATERIALS

3.1 DEFINITION OF REAL LITERACY MATERIALS

As you have read in Chapters 1 and 2, real literacy materials are printed materials that are commonly found in the environment in which we live. They are in abundance wherever we are. For example, inscriptions on T-shirt, bags, shoes, cosmetics and hair products are vivid examples of RLM. Our professional, social, religious and family life exposes us daily to real literacy materials such as:

1. Hospital forms
2. Receipts and invoices
3. Numbers on weighing scales
4. Bank and osusu/susu/njangi accounts books
5. Medical prescriptions
6. School reports
7. Marriage certificates
8. Hymn books/Bible/Koran
9. Tax slips/receipts
10. Handbills
11. Watches
12. Restaurant menu
13. Driving licences
14. Advertisements
15. Inscriptions on vehicles and boats
16. Directions
17. Writings on television screens

List below further examples of RLM in your community.

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8.
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10.

3.2 ADVANTAGES OF REAL LITERACY MATERIALS

Why is it advantageous to use real materials in literacy learning? What is the value of such materials?

The reasons are many: here are some:

1. They captivate the participants once they realise their value to them
2. They arouse interest and motivate the participants
3. They are readily available in the community
4. They are informative
5. They are sometimes LIFE-SAVING
6. They are not expensive to collect.

There are other reasons which you may be able to think of. List them below.

1.
2.
3.
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3.3 DISADVANTAGES OF REAL LITERACY MATERIALS

Inspite of its several advantages, Real Literacy Materials have their own disadvantages. Here are some of them:

1. They make a lot of demand on the facilitators who have to collect and mediate them to suit the level of their participants.

2. To be able to mediate the materials, the facilitator must have a high level of competence in English, and it is not always easy to secure the services of such people.

3. The collection and meaningful use of RLM needs highly trained facilitators.

4. Collection of appropriate RLM could be time consuming.

5. RLM may not be available in quantities required by the facilitators, especially in rural areas.

List below other disadvantages about RLM.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

3.4 WHO ARE REAL LITERACY MATERIALS MEANT FOR?

They are meant for all the members of the community who need the use of literacy or want to improve on their use of literacy. Indeed, if posters, road signs, calendars etc were not meant to be read, they would not be there. And if some members cannot read these materials, they are somehow handicapped. In other words, the existence in the environment of literacy materials shows that there is a need for literacy in that environment so that these materials can be used. The use of these real literacy materials will thus show to the participants the relevance of learning to read and write.

In order to develop awareness among the literacy learners about the need to be shown how to use real literacy materials, discuss with them their experience of the use of practical literacy in real-life situations. List these experiences down.

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There is another very important reason for using real literacy materials in your literacy classes. The main aim of learning to read and write is to use these skills in everyday life outside the classroom. If we can help the participants to begin the process of using their literacy skills on materials which come from outside the classroom, then they will continue to read and write in the community once the class is over. They will be accustomed to reading signs in the community; they will be accustomed to writing what is needed for their everyday life. There will be less problem of the transfer of literacy skills from the classroom into the community.

3.5 COLLECTING REAL LITERACY MATERIALS

Our next consideration is how to collect real literacy materials.

Here we suggest that you can go to various sites and collect all the materials that you can see. You can either collect it physically or you can copy it into a note book or you can take a photograph of it. You should have no problem with this since you can read and so collect these materials without difficulty.

Suggest some of the items that you might be able to collect in this way - e g. inscriptions on vehicles.

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However, we know that we do not possess a monopoly of knowledge of real literacy materials. Indeed, there are many of these materials that may be hidden from us and which the people themselves may spot - private letters, visiting cards, bills and receipts in shops etc.

You could thus ask the participants in your learning groups to help you to identify and collect some of these real materials. This has a major advantage, for recent trends in adult education are to encourage the student learners to do things for themselves and become less dependent on their facilitators.

Groups and/or individuals can visit banks, shops and houses where there are transactions involving buying and selling and the exchange of money and information.

For example, list some of the real literacy materials that can be used to make deposits in banks such as tellers; list the items on a driving licence, application form for passport etc.

Where the items cannot be brought into the classroom, simulation such as role play can be used.

Other ways of introducing real literacy materials into the classroom may of course include the use of songs, pictures and illustrations. Photographs will often have literacy materials in the background - encourage the student learners to bring their own photographs into the class to see if they can spot the literacy materials.

In cases where those who spot the materials in the community or in photographs are unable to write them out or take photographs, the help of a willing literate person can be obtained to copy the materials into a notebook.

Then you can list some of the materials that have been copied out by colleagues who are proficient in writing and reading, such as:

1. Labels on bottles
2. Names of articles in shops
3. Names of streets
4. Instructions on doors
5.
6.

Some of this material can be collected every time the class meets - it does not need to be done just once. For example, newspapers are real literacy materials and these can be brought into class regularly. So too are advertisements.

At every stage of the process of collecting RLM, participation of and interaction with the participants must be adopted. The idea is to get the learners fully involved in the process, as they have been the consumers and target of the real literacy materials in their communities.

3 6 USE OF REAL LITERACY MATERIALS IN THE CLASSROOM

We wish to stress that we see these materials as a supplement to the available printed literacy learning materials, not as a substitute for them.

a) Reading
The first use of the materials is perhaps logically to read them once they arrive in the classroom. You can display them on the wall for all to see and to use from time to time when they are ready.

b) Copying
Another way in which these materials can be used is to copy them out in the participants' own handwriting. For example:

THE LORD IS GOOD

or NO RIGHT TURN

THIS DRUG EXPIRES ON 31 DECEMBER 1997

c) Understanding
You could ask your learners to bring their bank passbooks, driving licences, or travel forms and ask them to read and copy from them. Special attention needs to be focused on the ability of the participants to understand what has been written and/or read.

d) Mediating
As facilitator, you can mediate in cases of the more difficult materials. The mediation may take the form of reducing the materials to simpler texts that will be more easily understood and used. This should only be done after you have exhausted the participants' contribution to the learning process.

Can you give any other examples of more difficult materials which need to be made simple, e.g. NO HAWKING (Do not sell here).
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e) Learning and Practising Literacy
The learning of literacy and practising of literacy must go on at the same time. But the RLM can be used in this process, not just the literacy primer. Be practical so as to create an atmosphere of reality. For example, use the T-shirts of the learners themselves if they are applicable.

Have you any other suggestions of RLM which belong to the learners and which can be used in this way?
1
2
3.
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f) Discussion

A further use of the RLM which you and your participants have collected is to discuss with them these materials: who wrote them? who are they intended for? how do they feel about them? etc. Find out from the participants, after they have collected the materials, the importance of these RLM to them individually and as a community. For example, 'Don't Urinate Here'; or 'Market'.

Have you any other suggestions of RLM that will affect the lives of your learners?

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One area for such a discussion is: What is their experience of being non-literate when all these real materials are around them and they can see them everyday?

g) Preparation of RLM by Participants

You can get the participants to prepare their own RLM as they look at the RLM they have collected. They can, for example, write new slogans to go on T-shirts; or mottos to write on vehicles. They can design a new (and much simpler) form to get a driving licence or to register for a vote, comparing their version with the official one. They can use role-play in different situations, writing the RLM which goes with those situations - for example, a scene at the police station, reporting an accident or a theft; or talking to a newspaper reporter about a fire which took place in the market etc; or an encounter with an extension worker (agriculture, health, civic awareness, education) etc.

Have you any other suggestions of items of RLM which your learners, on their own or in small groups, can write for themselves?

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Once this has gone on for some time, you can get the students to look at the primer which they have been given, they may be able to suggest ways in which it could be rewritten so as to make it more useful to them.

Think of other ways RLM can be used in the classroom.

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3.7 HOW TO PREPARE THE FACILITATORS TO PRODUCE AND USE RLM

All facilitators will need to be introduced to this idea of using real literacy materials in their classroom.

If you are a trainer or an organiser or a supervisor, you will need to plan some training for the facilitators in your programmes.

There will need to be two main parts to this process of training: especially learning how to collect the real literacy materials; and learning how to use them in the classroom.

a) **Collecting the Materials**
The best way to train the facilitators to collect RLM is to ask them to go out and do it and then to discuss the whole process with them as a group, to share their experiences with each other. They will thus see that it is possible - which some of them may doubt at first.

To encourage them to get the learners to collect real materials, you can use a role play: get one of the facilitators to brainstorm a list of ideas about how to use the various kinds of RLM which you have collected during the training programme.

Can you suggest other ways in which RLM can be introduced into the training of facilitators?

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3.8 HOW TO SUPPORT THE FACILITATORS TO IDENTIFY AND USE RLM

If the facilitators are to engage in using RLM not just once but regularly throughout the course, and if they are to be helped to use more and more of these as the class progresses, then they will need to be supported.

This is a new role for the facilitator. Normally, they are asked to teach the literacy primer and nothing else. Now we are suggesting to them that they adopt a new role - and an uncertain one at that, because they will not know what kind of RLM will come into their classes. They will have to be innovative; they will have to make up ideas to meet new situations, new answers to new questions. They will need a great deal of help and training.

This is the role of the organiser of the literacy programme and particularly the supervisor - whose role is not just to 'check up on' the facilitator but to offer help.

Facilitators will need help with:

a) **Logistics**
The equipment: one item they will find useful will be a folder in which to hold the real literacy materials; another will be some drawing pins or other means of putting RLM up on the walls.

b) **Regular Visits of Support**
They will want to know there is someone who understands and agrees with what they are doing, someone they can turn to regularly when they have problems. For the facilitator will need to innovate all the time as new materials come in.

c) **In-service Training**
They will need regular and relevant in-service training

d) **Community Participation**
They will find continuing community involvement very helpful; and the local community may be more interested in the literacy programme if they see it using the signs from the local community as part of the materials of learning.

e) **Incentive**
The facilitators may need some adequate incentive for undertaking this new form of work.

f) **Collaboration**
The facilitators will need to be helped to make contact with other agencies - e.g. health bodies for their health leaflets which are RLM; or agricultural agencies; or banks who may at first be suspicious; etc.

g) **Networking**
Networking among other facilitators; they will need to know that there are others who are doing the same kind of activity, that they are not the only ones. Where necessary, they can share experiences gained from using RLM.

Do you have any other suggestions of ways in which facilitators can be helped during their work with RLM?

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3.9 INTRODUCING RLM INTO THE COMMUNITY

The work of the real literacies materials approach will need to be developed further if it is to continue after the end of the literacy enhancement programme.

The following steps may be of help here:

1. Based on real literacy materials, the group of participants and the facilitator, where necessary, can produce and edit real materials which can then be transferred to the community.

2. The participants and the facilitator can design new real literacy materials for use in the community - signs and notices etc.

3. By making the participants more aware of the material in TV adverts, film notices, newspapers, radio material, etc, they will be encouraged to read more.

This process has to be continuous so as to create a reading culture that will whet the readers' appetite and motivate them to continue to read and to write. In this way, RLM and literacy activities will become sustainable.

Can you now suggest any other strategies for promoting the sustainable uses of literacy skills?

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4.0 CHAPTER 4: PRODUCING AND USING LEARNER-GENERATED MATERIALS

4.1 BACKGROUND

The preparation and production of materials for adult literacy classes are usually undertaken by groups of 'experts'. Often these experts write these materials based on their assumptions of the learners' interests and needs. This top-down approach does not always yield the desired results: the participants do not always make the 'appropriate' responses as the materials they are required to learn are not considered by them to be relevant to their experiences and purposes for learning.

Identify some of the titles of literacy learning materials in your locality. Can you say who wrote these texts; and how they were made?

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Gradually needs assessment studies were conducted with a view to deciding on the types of materials they wanted to read. One major shortcoming of this attempt was that the specific needs of the localities were not addressed; general conclusions were made about the needs of the learners.

Can you suggest some of the needs of adult literacy learners in your locality? Can you sort these learners into different groups? Are the literacy learning needs the same across all groups of learners? If they are different, in what ways will these differences affect your materials design for these groups?

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Finally, starting from about the mid-1980s, there has been a shift from the traditional approach towards a process which will enable literacy learning materials to be more relevant to the learners.

One such way is Learner-Generated Materials (LGM): getting the learners to participate in writing their own materials.

Take the standard text you are using; suggest ways in which it could be made more relevant to the different needs of different groups of learners.

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4.2 DEFINITIONS OF LEARNER-GENERATED MATERIALS

The primary concern of many adult literacysts today is finding ways of enhancing adult literacy programmes through involving learners at some stage or other in the conception, design, development, production and utilisation of literacy learning materials. Literacy materials that involve learners at any of these levels can be described as Learner-Generated Materials (LGM).

Some of these LGM materials are also referred to as Locally Generated Materials because they are made in the locality of the learners. The contents of LGM are determined by the perceptions and needs of the local people for whom they are meant.

There is however a distinction between Locally Generated Materials and Learner Generated Materials. The latter spring from a completely new attitude towards the learners. Most literacy providing agencies, even those providing some forms of Locally Generated Materials, work on the basic assumption that groups of adult learners cannot produce their own learning material until after they have learned to read and write. Learner Generated Materials on the other hand are based on the relatively unusual assumption - which many examples have now proved to be true that groups of adult learners can produce relevant materials for themselves while they are in fact learning to read and write; that in fact they learn to read and write much better if they are at the same time producing their own materials.

We need to draw a distinction between two kinds of LGM. The first is material which is specifically produced for learning to read and write, to develop one's literacy skills. The second kind of LGM is material which is produced by groups who are engaged in some other forms of development task - say a community newsletter, or a health brochure, or an agricultural or forestry booklet.

There is a major distinction between these two kinds of materials. The former is produced by and used in an adult literacy class for literacy purposes. The literacy learning will come first. The second will be produced by a group of participants who are engaged in some other form of development (say a community group) and they are designed to achieve the goals of that group. They will only incidentally be used for developing literacy skills. In this second case, 'literacy will come second'; the main work of the group will be something else.

4.3 ADVANTAGES OF LEARNER-GENERATED MATERIALS

Assume that you are a participant in a short training course for literacy facilitators. Would you like to take part in producing some of the materials to be used on this course? (Remember, this would be a good example of LGM.)

What are the reasons for your answer?

How do you think such materials would help you as a participant on this course?

How do you think such materials would help other people on other courses?

We are sure that you will have discovered from the above exercise that such an imaginary LGM for a facilitators' course would have caused you to be actively involved in the class work. It would have made you more interested in the course and given you more confidence in relating to your learners.

We suggest to you that the following are some of the advantages of using an LGM approach to adult literacy enhancement programmes.

a) The participants develop increased confidence in themselves in the process of producing such materials. This confidence helps to motivate them to want to learn more.

b) The participants come to see that they too can write materials and as such they no longer fear the use of books. Books and publishing have become 'demystified' for them.

c) Materials produced through LGM are more likely to be relevant to the needs of both the participants and the community. For example, their contents will normally cover issues of immediate concern and importance to the local community and to the individual members of the group; they will tend to treat issues that can be immediately applied to problem-solving.

d) Such materials will cover areas that are culturally appropriate to the specific individuals and the local community.

e) Participants will have a sense of ownership of the material and therefore of the literacy learning programme because they have been involved in their preparation.

f) LGM helps to empower the group members to take more control of their own lives.

Suggest some more advantages of using the LGM approach.

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Make a list of the advantages of working with groups of adult literacy learners on an LGM exercise.

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4.4 LGM may have its own disadvantages; list in the box below any disadvantages you think of.

Disadvantages of LGM.

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4.

5 HOW TO PREPARE LGM

There is no one way to help local groups to produce LGM: each group will act differently, depending on their needs and motivation.

One such process might be as follows:

a) General discussions and interviews with the learners on areas of interest.
b) Keywords from these discussions and interviews are written out by the facilitator on the blackboard or flip chart.
c) More discussions are held about the specific areas of interest pointed up by these keywords.
d) The participants can then be broken up into groups and asked to write short narrative passages using these keywords. They may wish to undertake some research at this stage - to interview some members of the local community, for example, or to carry out a survey of some feature in their own local environment (e.g. trees).
e) The output of each group is brought into the full class for general discussion and debate.
f) Based on the discussion, the groups go back to refine their output.
g) The facilitator selects the best outputs and uses these for further work in the whole class.

h) The participants are encouraged to produce their own short narratives based on the work of the groups.

i) The different outputs of the participants are assembled for use by other groups of literacy learners.

This model is based on a literacy learning class: it is a 'literacy first' model. But something very similar will operate with a 'literacy second' group. Let us take, as an example, a group of women providing catering services.

How would you start the discussion in order to arouse their interest and identify some of the keywords?

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As you will discover, getting a group of people to discuss things that interest them can be a difficult thing to do for several reasons:

1. people have different interests and needs
2. people have different personalities; some are shy while others are outspoken
3. people have different experiences and perceptions.

In the case of our imaginary group of women, they all share the same occupation. Nevertheless, their contributions may vary. Some could be interested in food preservation, some in profit making, some in bookkeeping etc. It is important therefore to identify their interests and needs. It is also important to handle the group discussions in such a manner that all interests and needs are catered for. This is not easy, but part of your new role as a facilitator is that of a "compromise striker".

Make a list of the major areas for discussion.
Select the keywords to write up on the blackboard or flip chart.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

If the primary purpose of the keywords is to learn literacy skills of reading and writing, then you may have to bear in mind whether you are using the 'whole word' method or the 'syllable' method.

But if the primary purpose is to produce a leaflet on some aspect of catering, then you will not need to be too concerned about this: the learners will learn all the words they need to write their own leaflet simply by writing them.

How would you help the participants to identify and write these keywords?

1.
2.
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4.
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The keywords to be identified from these discussions should cover a wide range of activities and interests. Assume that you have identified the keywords. What will be your next step with these words? Here are some options:

i find out from the members whether these words cover their interests
ii find out from the members whether other words should be included.

Then you can get them in small groups to write short passages about some aspect of these keywords.

State other steps that may be of help to you.

1.
2.
3.
4.
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4.6 LEARNER-GENERATED MATERIALS AND REAL LITERACY MATERIALS

One of the most effective ways of persuading groups to engage in LGM is to use the real literacies approach. Help the participants to find some real literacy materials in the local environment in which they are interested. You can then use this for discussion and as a model for their own writing. Once again keywords can be selected and learned.

For example, a film advertisement is an excellent example of RLM for many groups. Many participants are keenly interested in the next film and who are in it. They will search for the dates and times of the performances. There will be prices of seats - which can provide endless material for numeracy activities.

On the basis of such an advertisement, the group can write their own advertisement for a film which they would like to see. They can even write a brief and simple review of the film. They can sing its songs; they can analyse its content (for example, the way it portrays women or old people or wea men etc). One literacy group in India recently launched its own local film newspaper for their own locality. The literacy group members went to see the film every week; they then discussed it; they wrote a review about the film and they also advertised the next film. And the cinema owner paid to have it printed! All from a literacy class using LGM.

A dress-making class can produce its own patterns and designs. A women's group can produce its own health leaflet for other women in the community. A group of market traders can produce its own leaflet to distribute in other parts of the town; it can even have a plan of the market showing where each of the stalls stands.

In one group of women who were embroidering scenes from stories, the members wrote brief notes about their work so that when each item was sold, it carried with it the story of the scene. A women's tree planting group produced its own leaflet complete with drawings about what kind of trees to plant and how to plant and care for them.

In other words, any group of adults can produce their own materials - and in the process they will learn more about reading and writing than any lessons will teach them. They will of course need help and encouragement and guidance - but they can do it. And this is the most effective way to learn to read and write - not by using someone else's primer, but by writing their own materials.

Try to think up some kind of LGM which will be of value to your local community; how can you get your participants to start to write such materials?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

4.7 HOW TO USE LEARNER-GENERATED MATERIALS

In the previous section, you worked through the steps involved in the production of Locally/Learner-Generated Materials. In this section, we ask you to examine the ways in which you could use your LGM.

Many conventional literacy programmes organised by specialist material developers usually have the following materials:

* a facilitators' guide
* a learners' workbook
* a predetermined order, scope and sequence in the presentation of the content.

These things will not be available to you in the case of Learner- Generated Materials. Their absence will therefore pose some challenges to you as literacy facilitator.

Can you list some of these challenges?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The following are likely to feature in your list:

a) deciding on the purpose and focus of each LGM
b) deciding on how to use each LGM
c) deciding on how to store the LGM after production and use

d) deciding on the order of presentation of each LGM
e) deciding on the load (i.e. the learning material and information) of each LGM

Are there other challenges on your list which are not represented here? If so, you could list them here:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

It is true that LGM will pose you many challenges. But as we saw in the introduction, it will also bring many rewards. Don't be put off by the challenges; make a start with some small item of LGM and see what happens after that.

In using an LGM in your literacy class, you will find it useful to do the following:

a) decide on the purpose of the LGM. LGM can be used for several purposes:
* to encourage further language learning (language enhancement)
* to encourage further use of literacy skills)
* acquiring information through texts for use in problem solving in the community

When LGM is used for *language development*, the facilitator can follow the steps usually involved in adult language learning such as discussions followed by reading, word analysis, word building, more reading and finally some writing.

When the focus is on *literacy enhancement*, the activities will be concentrated more on writing sentences, spelling and vocabulary.

When the aim is primarily *problem-solving*, LGM can be used to develop messages on issues of importance to the literacy participants. Such issues will vary from one community to another and from one occupational group to another.

Identify some important issues to literacy participants in your area/community.

Can you arrange these in an order of importance with the most important at the top?

Now test this exercise with your participants: ask them to identify some issues and to arrange these in order of priority.

b) Use the LGM to promote discussion and debate among the participants in your class. It is important to take full advantage of the skills of your learners. They can be broken into smaller groups and the stronger members of each group can be used as group leaders and facilitators.

Here are some tips on the use of LGMs:

* get the participants to expand on the ideas in the text
* get them to change the keywords in the texts
* get them to illustrate the texts

Can you suggest other ways of using LGM?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

c) Storing LGM: It is advisable to store your LGM carefully. Open files/folders and store these according to the topics treated. It is equally advisable to display some of the LGMs (perhaps enlarged by the class) on the wall where possible. The participants are likely to find this very motivating. A small exhibition can be mounted at times for "outsiders" to see.

Two other related issues are the order of presentation of LGMs and the amount of content in each of them. As a facilitator, you must decide (with the participants wherever possible) which issues are important and arrange these in order of importance; then you can encourage the student learners to go about producing LGMs on these issues.

Suggest some issues that are likely to interest the participants in a literacy class in the area you work in; list these in order with the most important one first and so on.

Now get your participants to do the same.

If they can do this in writing, this is a LGM.

Try to think up some kind of LGM which will be of value to your local community; how can you get your participants to start to write such materials?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

4.8 PREPARING THE FACILITATORS TO PRODUCE AND USE LGM

Using LGMs in your literacy enhancement activities is certainly both challenging and rewarding.

As a facilitator, you will now be required to function as

* group moderator
* group supervisor
* editor
* material developer
* material adapter
* social investigator
* counsellor

Indeed, to some extent just as you have a supervisor who helps you, you will now become the supervisor for your learners when they are doing LGM.

Can you suggest some other roles which using LGM requires of you?

1.
2.
3.

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Which of these roles are you playing currently in your use of conventional literacy materials?

1.
2.
3.

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List some of the things which you think you need to learn to be able to perform these new roles effectively.

1.
2.
3.

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Facilitators using LGM will need **training** in the following areas if they are to be effective:

* group dynamics: how to form, maintain and sustain groups; how to ensure the participation of group members and different personality types in group work; how to maintain relationships in groups.
* literacy materials development: how to design, develop, adapt and use literacy materials; how to select and illustrate such materials.
* community development: the meaning and scope of development; personal development, social development, community development and national development.

Training programmes for facilitators will need to include these new areas.

Suggest other areas in which you may need training.

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2.
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4.
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4.9 SUPPORT FOR FACILITATORS

The use of LGM by facilitators requires sustained support from all persons involved in literacy delivery. Since literacy supervisors play very important roles in the delivery of literacy programmes, it is important that these are trained in the rationale and practice of LGM. In this way they will be able to support the facilitators by providing professional help in difficult situations. And they will be able to show a friendly understanding in their assessment of the work of the facilitators in the field. Specifically, supervisors and programme organisers need to support the facilitators by providing the necessary professional advice, funds and resources to ensure the sustainable development of and use of LGM.

5.0 HOW TO TRANSFER LGM INTO COMMUNITY USE

Learner Generated Materials are likely to be of interest to the local community since they will be more relevant to the local situation. They are likely to cover topics relating to community development such as clean water, controlling mosquitoes, using ORT etc. In this way, LGM can become useful for both the learners and the community.

In order to make this transfer possible, the facilitator and the class participants can involve local workers such as: extension workers in health, agriculture and community development; religious groups; teachers and other community activists in producing and using the materials. They can also be involved in the reproduction of these materials. The literacy class, through LGM, can become a small production centre for materials for community development.

Group work in LGM can therefore involve the learners in the following:

a) the preparation of simplified versions of leaflets/brochures for the operation and maintenance of infrastructure and machines in community development projects,
b) writing out oral traditions in shortened and simplified texts,
c) writing out traditional recipes that may be in danger of being lost,
d) preparation of texts about cultural games, dance and traditional skills.

In what other activities do you think the student learners can be involved?

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2.
3.
4.
5.

It is necessary to assume that the facilitator will be in the community; that he/she is someone who has the support and confidence of the community, a person of some stature and dignity. Above all, he/she should be a dedicated person.

What other qualities do you think the facilitator should have?

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With all of these qualities, the facilitator will be able to monitor and evaluate and if necessary modify the activities involved in the preparation and use of LGM, especially as the learner group becomes more and more independent in the preparation of their own LGM.

More specifically, he/she should be able to:

* check on reports brought in,
* assess the rate of progress made by the participants,
* encourage them to improvise and adapt the LGMs for use in other situations,
* merge LGM and RLM for use in the community, e.g. 'POST NO BILLS' can be modified into 'DO NOT FIX NOTICES'; 'MIX TO TASTE' can become 'MIX TO YOUR TASTE'.

In other words, the literacy class can become a sign writing centre for the whole of the local community, and in this sense, its work will continue after the literacy learning programme has come to an end.

List other responsibilities you think the facilitator may have in the preparation of LGM.

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In conclusion, the facilitator and the participants and indeed the whole community can help to assess the overall impact of the use of LGMs in real life. The merger between LGM and RLM should be ensured through committed efforts by everybody in the locality. Granted the success of the use of LGMs and RLMs in the literacy delivery process and their use in specific communities, they can be replicated in other communities.

6.0 CONCLUSION

In this guidebook we have tried to encourage you as a literacy facilitator with a group of adults who want to enhance their literacy skills in English or in their own language, to explore ways of using the real literacy materials which are in your everyday environment and to persuade and help your student learners to try to write some things for themselves. We feel sure that if you are able to do this successfully, the participants in your groups will be much more motivated to learn and will learn both more quickly and more "permanently".

But a word of warning: you may at first find this daunting. For some of you, there will seem to be so little real literacy materials available. Look carefully around you; look at what you yourself read and what you write. Look at the ways in which your participants cope with literacy activities and what kind of literacies they are engaged in. The materials are there. You may have to bring them into your village from the outside; you may have to adapt them, make them easier in reading terms - but you will really be helping your learners if you can do this.

For some of you, there may be too many such materials. You will not know what to collect, what will interest your student learners. In this case, let them help you. Let them identify and choose what they want to use. Then you can begin to add to this, to widen out their horizons, choose real materials with many different words etc. This will help them to feel they are controlling the process and will give you some clear guidelines as to what to include and what to omit.

We wish you well: and we hope that you feel that you would like to keep us informed of your progress in this new way of enhancing literacy skills. If so, do write to:

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